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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 11, 2009

Summary: President Zardari's wide-ranging interview with daily Financial Times, rejecting the "Obama administration's strategy of linking policy of Pakistan and Afghanistan" made front-page headlines in most major dailies on Friday. Newspapers highlighted reports that the Pentagon has "proposed transferring U.S. military equipment from Iraq to Pakistani security forces." Reports of the "killing of at least 21 Taliban including six foreigners in Swat" received extensive coverage. Several major newspapers highlighted USAID Mission Director Wilson's remarks, made while talking to a select group of journalists, that the "U.S. to help cut power shortfall by 1500 MW in 3 years," and that the "aid to be spent on education, health and economic growth." Also, in a front page story, the English daily, "Dawn," reported that "President Obama unveils plan to overhaul healthcare."

Most major newspapers ran editorials on the National Education Policy recently announced by the Federal government. However, some dailies editorialized other topics such as Swat after the war, recent statement of Admiral Mullen and the Dr. Aafia case etc. The populist, often sensational national English daily "The News," observed that the "evil rule of the Taliban was symbolized by their grotesque mistreatment of women. The future will be marked by the degree of ability shown in rehabilitating these women, who make up half of the people of Swat." Criticizing Admiral Mullen's statement about "unilateral strikes inside Pakistan," the center-right national English daily "The Nation," called it "an attempt to mount pressure on Pakistan to expand its military operation from Malakand to Waziristan, (and) it also shows erratic swings in the U.S. policy towards Pakistan." End Summary.

News Stories

"Zardari Rejects Obama's Af-Pak Strategy" "Dawn" (09/11)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has rejected the Obama administration's strategy of linking the policy on Pakistan and Afghanistan in an effort to end a Taliban insurgency and bring stability to the region.... 'Afghanistan and Pakistan are distinctly different countries and cannot be lumped together for any reason,' Mr. Zardari said in an interview with the 'Financial Times' on the anniversary of his first year in office."

"U.S. Looking To Transfer Military Equipment From Iraq To Pakistan"
"Daily Times" (09/11)

"The Pentagon has proposed transferring U.S. military equipment from

Iraq to Pakistani security forces to help Islamabad step up its offensive against the Taliban, according to officials and government documents."

"Pakistan Keen To Collect Humvees From Iraq" "Dawn" (09/11)

"Pakistan would be interested in reinforced armored vehicles if the United States asked Islamabad to collect surplus American weapons from Iraq, diplomatic sources told 'Dawn' on Thursday. The proposal to transfer U.S. military equipment from Iraq to Pakistan, although reported in the media, has not yet been officially conveyed to Islamabad. Pentagon officials, when contacted, said they were still working on a formal proposal."

"6 Foreigners Among 21 Taliban Killed In Swat" "Daily Times" (09/11)

"At least 21 Taliban - including six foreigners - were killed and 14 arrested in Swat on Thursday, said officials and locals. Security sources said the Taliban were killed during a search operation in Banjot. According to the sources, six of those killed are said to be Uzbeks holed up in a house."

"U.S. to Help Cut Shortfall By 1,500MW In 3 Years" "Business Recorder" (09/11)

"The United States, under its Energy Efficiency and Capacity Building program, will significantly reduce the Pakistan's energy shortfall of 1500 MW over the next three years through efficient use and conservation of energy. USAID-Mission Director in Pakistan Robert J. Wilson briefed the media on Thursday about the USAID program to be launched in Pakistan."

"USAID Assistance Likely To Swell To \$1.5 Billion" "Daily Times" (09/11)

"United States Agency for International Aid is likely to increase annual economic assistance of \$450 million to Pakistan for education, health, economic growth, democracy and governance to \$1.5 billion in the next few years, said USAID Mission Director Robert J. Wilson on Thursday."

"Obama Unveils Plan To Overhaul Healthcare" "Dawn" (09/11)

"President Barack Obama told Congress on Wednesday to end its political bickering and move quickly on a broad healthcare overhaul that would dramatically transform the U.S. health system and insurance market."

"Quitting Region Now Will Be Disaster: Pentagon" "Dawn" (09/11)

"The Pentagon has warned that it would be a disaster if the U.S. abandoned Pakistan and Afghanistan now. 'If indeed we were to turn our backs on Afghanistan again, and in the process essentially turn our backs on Pakistan again, that it would be a road to disaster,' Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell told a briefing in Washington."

"FM Radio Launched" "Dawn" (09/11)

"The Frontier Government on Thursday launched the test transmission of first-ever FM Radio Station to counter the propaganda of religious extremists and provide its listeners healthy entertainment and information."

"6 Militants Killed In Orakzai, Kurram" "The News" (09/11)

"Six militants were killed and three others sustained injuries when gunship helicopters pounded the hideouts of the militants in Orakzai and central Kurram agencies on Thursday."

"Swat Taliban Say 5 Shooras Members In Government Custody" "The News" (09/11)

"The Swat Taliban on Thursday alleged that five leading members of their organisation holding secret peace talks with the military authorities for the past eight days had been taken into custody as they were no longer traceable."

"Concern Voiced At Khyber Agency Operation" "The News" (09/11)

"Fearing a humanitarian crisis, the IDPs Network, an alliance of the civil society organizations, has expressed concern over the ongoing operation in Bara and demanded halt to indiscriminate shelling on the villages."

"33 Suspects Arrested From Mohmand Agency" "Daily Times" (09/11)

"Security forces on Thursday arrested 33 suspects and demolished the houses of three wanted militants at Lakaro tehsil of Mohmand Agency, official sources said."

"\$20 Million Needed To Get Pak Children Back To School In NWFP, Says UN" "The Nation" (09/11)

"A shortfall of about \$20 million in educational funding is hampering efforts to get Pakistani children back to school in the aftermath of the recent anti-Taliban military drive in the NWFP, The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced on Thursday."

"Only 3pc of Required \$58 Million Received: UN" "Dawn" (09/11)

"Many Pakistanis who have returned home after fleeing fighting between the army and the Taliban say they cannot survive for more than two weeks without aid, the United Nations said on Thursday.... UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Martin Mogwanja said the UN had only received three per cent of around \$58 million it needed for what it calls 'early recovery' projects."

"Coordination Must For Check On Aliens" "The News" (09/11)

"Diplomatic and security circles want Pakistani government to monitor the members of a U.S. firm, engaged in the capacity-building and training of the law-enforcement agencies of Pakistan. The U.S. firm, DynCorp, under a contractual arrangement between Pakistan and the U.S., had been assigned the task of law-enforcement agencies' training, security matters and aviation cooperation. However, Richard Snelsire, the U.S. Embassy spokesman, when approached declined to confirm or deny the presence of DynCorp explaining, we don't discuss security issues."

"Taliban Active In 97 pc Of Afghanistan" "Dawn" (09/11)

"The Taliban had a significant presence in almost every corner of Afghanistan, data from a think tank showed on Thursday. A security map by policy research group the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS) showed a deepening security crisis with substantial Taliban activity in at least 97 per cent of the country."

"U.S. Urges India, Pakistan to Improve Ties" "The News" (09/11)

"The United States on Wednesday called for improvement in Pakistan-India relationship through reciprocal steps as a senior American diplomat described cooperative relations between the two South Asia countries an 'important part of a successful strategy' for Pak-Afghan region, Robert Blake, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia said."

"Meeting But No Peace Talks: India" "Dawn" (09/11)

"Indian Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna said on Thursday he would meet his Pakistani counterpart on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York later this month but this should not be seen as part of their official peace talks which would begin only after Islamabad showed progress in the Mumbai terror probe."

"U.S. Acquires Two Houses In Vicinity Of Dr. Khan's Residence" "Express" (09/11)

"United States in Islamabad has acquired two houses on rent in sector E-7 in the vicinity of the residence of founder of Pakistani nuclear bomb Dr. AQ Khan. Some very credible sources in the U.S. Embassy have disclosed that the United States has hired two hundred houses in the sectors of F-6, F-7, G-6, E-7, F-8, F-10, F-11 and I-8. Dr. Khan lives in house no. 206 at the Hillside Road in sector

E-7. According to sources, United States has acquired two houses in E-7, 37 in F-6, 40 in G-6, 41 in F-7, 26 in F-8, 20 in F-10, 25 in F-11 and nine houses in I-8 sector. And the houses in F-6 and G-6 are under complete U.S. surveillance, and the other houses are being used as offices of various NGOs and attached offices and residences.
"

Editorials/Op-eds

"Swat After The War," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/11)

"It is a fact too that in Swat the public space for women has been reduced.... Fear lingers on even after the Taliban defeat. Some report that remnants of the Taliban are still present in towns or villages. Pro-active measures are needed to alter the situation. These women must be restored to their rightful place as equal citizens. Indeed urgent schemes are needed to offer vocational training and other help to these women - and especially to those who must support families. The evil rule of the Taliban was symbolized by their grotesque mistreatment of women. The future will be marked by the degree of ability shown in rehabilitating these women, who make up half of the people of Swat."

"U.S. Sabre Rattling," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/11)

"While the warning by U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen that the U.S. would conduct unilateral strikes inside Pakistan to pursue those who had attacked U.S. citizens is an attempt to mount pressure on Pakistan to expand its military operation from Malakand to Waziristan, it also shows erratic swings in the U.S. policy towards Pakistan.... Under the circumstances, the U.S. must realize that this sort of sabre rattling by the Chief of U.S. armed forces further vitiates relations between the two countries. A sensible way of reining in troublemakers inside Pakistan, so that they could do no harm to the U.S., is by adding steel to its spine, providing it with anti-terror weaponry like drones, sophisticated helicopter gunships, night vision goggles and so on. Only then the alliance can move in the right direction."

"Extra Security Needed For NATO Embassies," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (09/11)

"The militants have been targeting the NATO supply convoys, burning oil tankers and other items in the NWFP and Balochistan. In this scenario, the U.S. has already asked its citizens in Pakistan to restrict their movement. It is the moral and diplomatic responsibility of Pakistan to ensure security of diplomats. We would therefore again urge the Government to direct the agencies to be extra vigilant and ensure complete security of Embassies of Germany and other NATO countries."

"Dr. Aafia Case And The ICJ," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/11)

"The honorable Lahore High Court observed Wednesday that the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqi's repatriation and detention in America 'could be referred' to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the Pakistan Friendship and Commerce Treaty 'without the consent of the U.S. administration'.... The U.S. is averse to yielding sovereignty to the ICJ or any other international tribunal. When in one case the ICJ decided against it 'ex parte,' as it were, it refused to comply because the ICJ has no mechanism of enforcement except the UN Security Council."

"Looking For A Direction," an op-ed by Khurshid Akhtar Khan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/11)

"Sixty-seven percent of our public is fiercely against the Americans, who have been our allies since the fifties. Our economic survival has been dependent upon the American financial support, access to its export markets, defence purchases, advanced education and training that they have been providing to us. Our extremist

elements want to defeat America that is the world's largest military power that spends \$700 billion each year on its defence and is practically inaccessible for conventional attacks. None of Afghanistan governments have ever been friendly with Pakistan. Yet our religious zealots misguide and motivate simple young men to join the Afghan militants in fighting against the U.S. and NATO forces and allow our territory to become sanctuaries for the wanted criminals. It is time we revisit and rationalize our values. It is time our leaders join to give an unambiguous direction and lead us to where we truly belong."

"These Our Leaders," an op-ed by Haroon al-Rasheed in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (09/11)

"Prime Minister Gilani has said that the infamous American security company, Blackwater, is not operating in Pakistan and that its activities were stopped in February 2009. Mr. Gilani can verify the presence of this dreaded agency in Pakistan provided he enjoys access to some files at the Presidency. It will be dawned on him that in 2008 Ministry of Interior and the provincial governments had been directed to monitor the activities of Blackwater, operating under the new name 'XE.' Moreover, a few days back four persons were detained near the FIA Headquarters in Islamabad who later turned out to be the operatives of this firm. Dozens of former officers of our armed forces and intelligence agencies have joined the Blackwater on very lucrative salaries. Agents of the 'XE' distribute money among poor people in our tribal areas, while the Taliban chase them. Resultantly, innocent people are killed in clashes between the two. The prime minister can also contact Army Chief General Kayani and the ISI chief General Pasha to confirm that Blackwater is trying to carve out a state within the state of Pakistan. The masses are enduring Mr. Gilani despite his poor performance as the prime minister, but his statement regarding the Blackwater are completely unintelligible. Had he jumped into the bandwagon of Ambassador Holbrooke? Regrettably, our elected government has surpassed its predecessor military regime to please the U.S. Almost 2,500 American trawlers enter Afghanistan from Karachi via Chamman or the Torkham border but nobody knows what stuff these mammoth vehicles bring back to Pakistan. Apart from stoking insurgency in Balochistan and sectarianism in our society, the United States is also propping up India as its possible successor in Afghanistan. On the other hand, all indicators show that the U.S. economy is plunging into total collapse, and time has come to detach Pakistan from America rather than bolstering this unnatural alliance."

"U.S. Embassy Surge," an op-ed by Wajahat Latif in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/11)

"Islamabad is considered one of the most dangerous capitals in the world. In spite of such dangers, the U.S. Embassy is expanding its staff and operations in Pakistan. We do not know the nature of staff and sections being reinforced, but according to the current rumors they are also military and security related. This is in addition to the private contractors to whom several security tasks are outsourced. Blackwater, with a reputation from the killing fields of Iraq, is one such firm operating from Peshawar, Karachi and Islamabad albeit under different names. The ostensible reason for the expansion is the transparent monitoring and management of \$7.5 billion U.S. aid inflow over five years. The GOP is not trusted anymore and the Americans will watch closely how their money is spent.... Embarrassed, the government officials seem unable to speak the truth, conveying an impression as if they have something to hide.... It could be unprecedented, but Pakistan is considered a fair game."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson